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THE

PETITION and CASE

OF THE

*Embroiderers, Flourishers, Raisers and  
Stitchers of East-India Silks, and  
other Goods, and Stainers thereof,*

*Together with those that Employ them,  
And of many others, &c.*

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THE

STATIONER

OF THE

and  
other Goods and Services  
And other

T O  
The Right Honourable  
T H E  
Lords Spiritual and Temporal,  
In PARLIAMENT Assembled.

T H E  
P E T I T I O N and C A S E  
O F T H E  
*Embroiderers, Flourishers, Raisers  
and Stitchers of East-India Silks,  
and other Goods, and Stainers  
thereof,*

Together with those that Employ them,  
And of many Others ;

In Relation to the B I L L,  
F O R

*Prohibiting the Wearing of East-  
India and Persia Wrought  
Silks, Bengals, &c.*

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London, Printed Anno, 1696.





T O

The Right Honourable

T H E

Lords Spiritual and Temporal,

N O W

Assembled in P A R L I A M E N T.

*May it Please Your Lordships,*

**W**E Humbly Address this Paper to  
Your Lordships in General : But  
adventure in an especial manner  
to Implore the Favour of You, Our good  
Lords, the Bishops ; because Matters rela-  
ting to Piety and Vertue are more imme-  
diately under the Care of Your Lordships.

The Late Queen, of Ever Blessed Me-  
mory, well knowing, That most Vices have  
their Original from Sloth and Idleness, did

by Her own Good Example, give great Encouragement to all kind of Works with the Needle, and otherwise, relating to your Petitioners respective Employments ; where by those of Better Quality might find Disposition and Employment, and the Meaner Sort receive an Honest Maintenance.

There is hardly any Country in the World, where the Women have been so much a Burthen to the Publick, as in *England* ; whereas, in other Nations, they Contribute a large Proportion to the Livelihood of their Families.

But the Countenance Her Sacred Majesty did give to Needle-Works of all kinds has made them for these Six Years last past so Fashionable, and of such General Use in this Kingdom, that many Thousands of Women do thereby Maintain themselves, their Aged Parents, and Young Children.

By which Means the Weaker Sex have been preserved from those Temptations to which Want might otherwise incline them, and, by this Housewifery, many Modest Virgins have recommended themselves to Frugal and Industrious Husbands.

We must crave leave to lay before Your Lordships, That the long War Abroad, the Civil War in *Ireland*, and other Accidents at Home, have made great Change



in Families heretofore Rich and Prosperous. And we the Principal Employers of these Embroiderers, Stitchers, &c. in and about London, (if it were fit and proper) could make it appear to the Parliament, That very many Gentlewomen of good Birth and Education, have not any Bread or Subsistence, but what they Earn Dayly by their Work, as 'tis deliver'd to us.

We have not thought it Dutiful or Decent to trouble either Houses of Parliament with Complaints or Clamours, Not but that our Numbers are exceeding great, and our Case full as deplorable as that of the Weavers.

We shall not pretend to Calculate how many Hands are thus employ'd, but this in some measure may be guess'd at, by Considering, of what general Use, from the highest, to the lowest, those *Indian Goods* are, which we improve in *England*.

If, as some People apprehend, the intended Prohibitions should Occasion the intire Loss of the *East-India Trade*, we may venture to affirm, That many Thousand Families will thereby be utterly ruin'd, who have no Other Subsistence than by bettering those Sort of Goods by their Skill and Fancy.

If the Prohibitions should so Opperate as to loose the Trade, it would undo some Hundreds of Families, who live by Printing, Dying, and Staining the Courser Callicoes. For in such a Case those who set these Men at Work, must be forc'd either to buy Callicoes of the *Dutch*, or *Scotch-Cloth* at near double the Price.

Many Thousand Hands are likewise employ'd in Stitching *Callicoes*, and Flourishing *Muzslings*, which must intirely lose their Work, if these Prohibitions should destroy the *East-India* Trade; no other kind of Linnen being proper for that Use, but fine *Callico* and *Muzslin*.

But may it please your good Lordships, The intended Prohibitions will certainly ruin yet a greater Number of People, who intirely Subsist, by Staining, Painting, Printing, Embroidering, Stitching, and Flourishing a great part of the *Ginghams*, *Plain Damask*, *Bengals*, *Tafferies* and *Satins*, and several other sorts of Goods that come from *India*.

If it should be Objected, That this Workmanship may be employ'd upon *Silks* Manufactur'd at home; We humbly Answer, That it will not be Worth Our while so to do, and that it cannot be practicable, because many of the fore-mention'd

mention'd Wares, come as Cheap into Our Hands, as the Silk comes into the Weavers Reed.

As for Example, The first Cost to us, of an *Indian Silk* may be Two Shillings the Yard, which when We have improv'd, by Embroidering, Stitching, or otherwise, may Sell for Nine Shillings *per* Yard, whereby there is gain'd for the Manufacturers Livelyhood Seven Shillings *per* Yard.

A *Silk* of very little better Substance, either brought from *Italy*, *France*, and *Holland*, or Wrought at Home, shall Cost Nine Shillings *per* Yard : Notwithstanding which, the *Indian Silk* so improv'd by us, shall do equal the Service, and be More acceptable to the Customer than any *European Silk*.

And, may it please your Lordships, generally Speaking, We can afford Wares so improv'd, Cheaper, as Serviceable and more pleasing to the Eye, than any *Silkman*, Because among the *Silk-Weavers*, a good Workman will expect half a Crown a-day, and not work hard from Six in the Morning to Six at Night, whereas Our People begin at Five, and are at their Needles till

till Nine at Night : and much the greatest part of them earn not above Six Pence by the Day.

It must without doubt import any Country that the prime Cost in Manufactures wrought from foreign Materials should be as low as possible.

And those Manufactures are to be encouraged, which Employ many Hands though at small Wages, because the Profit thereby arising, becomes, so, more dispers'd among the Common People.

And 'tis humbly hop'd, such Works may be Countenanc'd by the State, that Employ hands which would otherwise be Idle.

We who Employ many Thousand Families in the second Manufacturing and Improving *East-India* Goods, are ready to make it appear before Your Lordships when call'd upon, by the Oaths of Creditable Persons,

First, That the Prime Cost of our Goods is so low that we can afford to let the Poor Manufacturers be reasonable Gainers by Us.

Secondly, That this Gain is widely dispers'd among the Common People reaching to Parts very distant from London.

Thirdly

Thirdly, That we Employ some Thousands of Children and Women, who probably could not otherwise get an honest livelyhood.

And, Lastly, May it please Your Lordships, We shall perhaps be able to prove, That upon the whole, not many fewer Families Subsist by Improving *East-India* Goods, than by means of the Silk Manufacture.

All which will appear plainly to such as consider, how great the Consumption is, of these Wares, by both Sexes, and among all Degrees of People.

The Head-Dressings for Women, Waste-Coats, and Night-Caps for Men, Stitch'd Quilts, Embroideries, and Flourish'd *Muzslins* for both Sexes, with many other things that might be enumerated, must of Necessity set many Hands at work upon different Manufactures, of which the Prime Cost of the first Materials at the *East-India* Sales, is not, one with another, above a third; the other two thirds being divided among the Poorer sort, and such as Employ 'em.

We are afflicted from the bottom of Our Hearts at the Case of the Poor *Weavers* who want Work, but we must Crave  
leave



leave to lay before Your Lordships, That VVe the Employers of these Embroiderers and other Manufacturers are credibly Informed that the *Weavers* want of Business does not arise from the Importation of *East-India* Goods, but from other Causes. For,

First, Before the VVar, when much greater Quantities of *Wrought Silks* were brought from *India*, they had full Employment and there was no Complaint.

Secondly, The Excessive Price of *Raw Silk*, and the present Scarcity of Money (occasion'd by the VVar) are Causes that the Head *Weavers* cannot set the Poor to VVork.

So long a VVar must needs afflict all the different Ranks of Men, and the *Weavers* bear but their proportion in the Common Calamity.

The Nobility and Gentry pay in Taxes a Fifth part of their Revenues, besides well nigh double for all Materials of a Foreign Growth.

The Merchant pays more now for Freight and Seamens VVages than ever, besides the hazzard he runs from an Enemy, who has diverted

diverted his whole Naval Strength to a Pyratrical War.

The present Want of Species makes Trading dead every where, and we who are now Petitioners before Your Lordships, have Our full Share in this general Misery; being forc'd to keep at Work, and Pay Our People, though Our Goods can have but little Vent.

But we live in hopes that the High Wisdom, and Valour, of the King, will restore Our Affairs either by a Peace, or by His Victories Abroad.

And in the mean while we Your Petitioners humbly submit it to the Consideration of Your Lordships, how far it may be Consistent with Your Piety and Justice to relieve one sort of Men at the Expence of others, a yet more helpless People.

We hope the Blessed Memory of Her Sacred Majesty, now Deceased, will prevail upon Your Lordships to take Our Case into Your Thoughts, and the sad Condition of such as depend upon Us, who are generally Orphans, Poor Widows, and Young Virgins, who must be depriv'd of their Subsistence, if the Prohibition of *East-India* Goods passes, which is now Propos'd in Parliament.

The

The Hearty Prayers of Widows and Virgins VVe hope will undoubtedly bring Success to Your Lordships Councils, and Prosperity to the Kings Arms, who will be shortly Contending in the Field for the Liberties of *Europe*.

Not only some Thousands of VVomen subsist from VVork meerly occasion'd by *East-India* Goods, as well as very many Families of other Manufacturers, but many Virgins also have been thereby preserv'd from Vice and Corruption; And 'tis upon this Score chiefly that we presume to Implore Your Lordships assistance, who are the Principal Protectors of Modesty and Vertue.

The Protection of the VVeaker Sex, and the keeping of them within the Bounds of Modesty and Goodness, have been always the Care of VVise Governments; because in all Countries the Courage of Men does very much depend upon the Vertue of their VVomen: For at all Times, and in all Places, where the VVomen have grown Vicious, either through too much VVealth, or too much VVant, the Men have immediately become Fearful and Effeminate.

The

The Premises consider'd, VVe humbly hope Your Lordships will not think it Adviseable, nor for the Publick Good, to pass this Bill now Propos'd for Prohibiting the VVearing *East-India* and *Persia Wrought Silks, Bengals, &c.*

*And Your Petitioners, as in Duty bound, shall ever Pray for the Welfare and Prosperity of your Lordships.*

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F I N I S.

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